



# **A personal message from Kathy Keith**

December 1, 2015



As 2015 comes to a close, it is a good time to reflect on where we are in our shared goals of making northern New Mexico a better place to live, work and raise strong families. Together with community partners, the Laboratory has provided scholarships, supported over 500 nonprofit organizations and put more than 26,000 meals on the tables of our neighbors.

2015 marks the ninth year of Los Alamos National Laboratory's Community Commitment Plan, which was formulated in 2006 and approved by the U.S. Department of Energy as a part of the Los Alamos National Security (LANS), LLC management contract. Over the years, we have made measurable progress in the three focus areas of the plan: education, economic development and community giving.

The Los Alamos Employees' Scholarship Fund (LAESF), which is open to students from across the region, not just the children of Laboratory employees, has helped more than 1,000 students from Taos, Rio Arriba, Los Alamos, Santa Fe, Mora, San Miguel and Sandoval Counties since 2006. It is rewarding to see our scholarship winners complete their degrees and have the opportunity, if they so choose, to be employed at the Laboratory.

About fifty percent of students receiving LAESF scholarships do seek employment at Los Alamos. Students like Alicia Salazar-Crockett, a 2008 graduate of Española Valley High School and bronze scholarship winner, who went on to earn a bachelor's degree in engineering from New Mexico State University and a master's degree in nuclear engineering from the University of Michigan, exemplify the pipeline the scholarships can create to a well-paying job near home. Alicia is now a Laboratory staff member in the area of Nuclear Criticality Safety.

Laboratory employee giving to nonprofit organizations has increased year-by-year from \$730,000 to \$2.2 million in 2015, with LANS providing \$9.7 million in matching funds.

These financial contributions have helped the Laboratory build strong partnerships with nonprofits that do the hard work in communities by providing essential services. We proudly partner with the United Way of Northern New Mexico and the United Way of Santa Fe County, for example. Both have grown new programs that support people with mental health and substance abuse issues as well as providing development opportunities for children starting at birth.

The Venture Acceleration Fund (VAF) is one of the Community Commitment Plan's key investments in the area of economic development. LANS created the fund almost a decade ago to provide start-up capital to new regional businesses. In 2015, the VAF was selected by the International Economic Development Council for their Gold Award of Excellence for Entrepreneurial Development.

The growth of the VAF has been a true community effort, with the Regional Development Corporation providing the management of the fund and Los Alamos County, the City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe County and the New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Program contributing funds in addition to LANS.

I am reminded of the old Buddhist saying, "If we are facing in the right direction, all we have to do is keep on walking."

It is a pleasure to live and work in a region where we have so many people walking together to strengthen our communities.

- Kathy Keith